

Chapter 7

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Services for Canada's Law
Enforcement Community

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Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Services for Canada's Law Enforcement Community

Main Points

7.1 The levels of service that the RCMP provides to the Canadian law enforcement community do not meet the needs of its clients. For example, the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC), a backbone system that provides information to police officers, courts, prisons and parole officers, was unavailable regionally or nationally 11 percent of the time last year. DNA analysis takes too long and is limited to only the most important cases. Thus, its full potential for public safety is not being realized. Backlogs of up to two months exist for inputting criminal history records and fingerprints into data banks. As a consequence, the criminal records and fingerprint data available to the police and others are not current. In addition, criminal record checks required by employers or volunteer organizations take too long.

7.2 It is imperative that senior management at the RCMP take action to eliminate backlogs in many of the services and improve efficiency. In particular, the RCMP needs to rationalize the number of laboratories in order to improve their level of service. Significant improvement is also required in performance measurement and the reporting of results. It is important that users, senior RCMP management and Parliament know these results.

7.3 The arrangement between the federal government and the provinces set in 1966 for these services needs to be rethought. It is time for a clear agreement among all the players in the law enforcement community — in the federal, provincial and municipal governments — on level of service, funding arrangements, user input, management and accountability. A new agreement will require the collaboration of all parties.

Background and other observations

7.4 The RCMP provides a range of services that are essential to the Canadian law enforcement community: police, courts, prisons and parole boards. These services include fingerprint identification, criminal history records, forensic laboratories, criminal intelligence and on-line access to data banks such as vehicle registration, drivers' licences, wanted persons and stolen property. In 1998–99, the RCMP spent approximately \$122 million on these services.

7.5 There are a number of areas where the RCMP deserves credit for the way it has operated these services: it has kept the old CPIC information system operational while awaiting a new system; it has implemented new forensic techniques such as DNA analysis; it is developing a data bank for DNA; and it has made major upgrades to fingerprint identification and criminal history records systems.

7.6 Our last audit of services to the law enforcement community was in 1990. We made a number of recommendations to improve operational economy and efficiency. Attention has only recently been paid to many of our recommendations and others have not been addressed. These national services have also been reviewed several times over the past decade by the Solicitor General Canada, the Treasury Board Secretariat and the RCMP itself.

The RCMP agrees with the findings and indicates that it will be taking action.

Introduction

7.7 The Royal Canadian Mounted Police provides a set of national services that assist members of Canada's law enforcement community in their work and enhance public safety. For example:

- Police officers need to know if the car they stop is stolen, or if the driver is dangerous, unstable or wanted for any offences.
- The courts use the results of a DNA analysis or a fingerprint check to convict.
- Parole boards need to have accurate information on an inmate's criminal history record to decide whether to release and on what conditions.
- Employers need to know whether a new employee has a criminal record.
- Customs and Immigration require relevant information on visitors to Canada.

7.8 The RCMP national services consist of a number of components:

- **Forensic laboratories** analyze crime scene evidence to help in identifying suspects.
- **Criminal history records** are maintained for 2.8 million criminals.
- **Fingerprint identification** is used in over a quarter of a million fingerprint searches each year.
- **The Canadian Firearms Registry** registers guns and gun owners.
- **The Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC)** links field staff to a range of data banks via telephone or computer. Data banks include drivers' licences and vehicle plates, stolen vehicles and boats, warrants for arrest, missing persons and property, criminal history records, fingerprints, firearms registration, missing children, and other subjects.

- **The Canadian Police College** provides advanced and specialized training to police officers.

- **Criminal Intelligence Service Canada** gathers and shares information from different agencies on organized crime.

7.9 As shown in Exhibit 7.1, these national services represent an expenditure of over \$122 million annually (about six percent of the RCMP's spending) and account for 1,169 staff (about six percent of RCMP personnel). The different services have one business plan but are primarily managed individually.

Focus of the audit

7.10 Our audit focussed on the key services that the RCMP provides to the Canadian law enforcement community. The Canadian Firearms Registry was examined only in relation to CPIC. We last reported on these services in our 1990 Report, Chapter 27.

7.11 The objectives of our audit were to determine:

- whether the RCMP has improved its essential services to the law enforcement community and whether it has made progress in responding to areas of concern identified in previous audits and studies; and
- the extent to which the RCMP has the capacity, structures and procedures to respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of clients in the next decade.

7.12 Further details on the audit can be found at the end of the chapter in **About the Audit**.

Observations and Recommendations

Forensic Laboratories

7.13 The six RCMP forensic laboratories are located in Halifax,

**RCMP national
services are essential
to public safety.**

Ottawa, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton and Vancouver. These laboratories provide scientific examination of criminal evidence to Canadian police agencies, Crown counsels and other federal, provincial and municipal agencies. While they are paid for by the federal government, the main beneficiaries are the provinces. Over 85 percent of the casework involves responding to requests from provincial and municipal agencies.

7.14 The RCMP laboratories do not serve the entire law enforcement community. The provinces of Quebec and Ontario operate their own forensic laboratories, and the Vancouver City Police operate a forensic firearms laboratory. Health Canada analyzes illicit drugs for law enforcement agencies across Canada.

7.15 The six laboratories provide a full range of forensic analysis services in various disciplines, including biology (for example, DNA analysis), document analysis, firearms, alcohol, chemistry and toxicology. Each discipline is supported by a Chief Scientist.

7.16 An executive group in Ottawa provides overall management of the forensic laboratory. The central laboratory in Ottawa performs several functions:

- research and development and quality assurance;
- full laboratory services to police forces in the Hull/Ottawa area in exchange for local policing services;
- DNA processing (one of three centres);

Exhibit 7.1

Expenditures 1998–99

	Actual \$ millions	FTEs ¹
Forensic laboratories	41	316
Identification services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal history records • Fingerprint identification • Canadian Police Information Centre 	27	341
Canadian Firearms Registry ²	16	323
Canadian Police College	8	89
Criminal Intelligence Service Canada	1	15 ⁵
Informatics ³	20	85
Other ⁴	9	
Total	122	1,169

Notes:

¹ FTEs refer to full-time-equivalent personnel.

² The Department of Justice is funding the entire Registry (the RCMP expenditures are one component), estimated at \$60 million annually in future years for all components.

³ Informatics covers all information technology services within the RCMP, reported at \$103 million. We estimate that of this amount, approximately \$20 million was attributable to core services such as CPIC, fingerprint identification and criminal history records.

⁴ “Other” consists of allocated overhead costs, such as health services for regular members, *RCMP Pension Continuation Act* payments, and payments to injured members.

⁵ Does not include secondments from outside agencies to the RCMP.

Source: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

- a national counterfeit service (currency and travel documents); and
- development and operation of the new DNA data bank, which is expected to become operational in 2000.

7.17 During 1998–99, RCMP laboratories had 316 staff and spent \$41 million (see Exhibit 7.2). This includes \$11 million that was spent in 1999–2000 to construct new facilities in Ottawa, which are estimated to cost \$21.5 million in total.

Forensic laboratories are an essential component of the criminal justice system

7.18 Forensic laboratories have become an important element in many stages of the criminal justice system. There is a general trend in criminal prosecutions to rely more and more on forensic science because it is better able to withstand scrutiny. Similarly, specific forensic techniques are very important to police work.

7.19 The RCMP has carried out a variety of initiatives that have gained it an international reputation. These include the development of an automotive paint database as an international resource for investigations involving motor vehicles. It has also developed a database on glass for use in assisting investigators of motor vehicle accidents and break and enters. In addition, the RCMP is developing a “diamond fingerprinting” database to assist in combatting organized crime activities. Most significant has been the development and implementation of DNA testing.

7.20 DNA analysis is one of the most important tools available to forensic laboratories. Since 1988–89, DNA analysis has been used in Canada to secure convictions — mainly of violent crimes. It has also helped to eliminate suspects and has led to the exoneration of the previously convicted, including

Guy Paul Morin and David Milgaard. RCMP laboratories also assisted in the identification of victims from the 1998 Swissair Flight 111 disaster. Analysis of about 1,300 DNA samples contributed to the identification of the 229 victims.

7.21 The RCMP is developing a national DNA data bank for police investigations. The DNA data bank will assist the police in identifying and apprehending repeat offenders by comparing DNA from crime scenes with DNA from convicted offenders. This will aid police in identifying suspects and in reducing the length and cost of investigations. It could also lead to both reducing the number and length of trials and increasing the likelihood of conviction.

Delayed results increase costs and slow investigations

7.22 DNA technology is a very useful tool for police investigations. However, delays in obtaining results slow police investigations and hamper the ability to eliminate suspects and make arrests

DNA analysis is one of the most important tools available to forensic laboratories.

	1998–99
Alcohol	\$ 1,325,736
Chemistry	2,066,233
Documents	1,588,139
Counterfeit	585,259
Firearms	1,681,795
Biology	4,660,163
Toxicology	2,104,124
DNA data bank	425,945
Halifax laboratory	5,759,218
Equipment and other	21,096,146
Total	\$ 41,292,758

Exhibit 7.2
Forensic Laboratories — Direct Dollar Expenditures by Function

Source: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Note: The Halifax laboratory is shown separately because during 1998–99 it was in operation for only a portion of the year and would therefore have skewed the overall figures. “Equipment and other” includes several items, such as \$11 million spent in 1999 to construct the new Ottawa laboratory and employee benefits of about \$3 million in 1998–1999.

**Delays in obtaining
DNA results slow
police investigations
and increase costs.**

quickly. Thus, delayed results can significantly increase costs and waste scarce resources. For example, a homicide case on which the laboratory took almost six months to submit its report involved \$1.3 million in investigation costs, because police had to resort to expensive investigation techniques. It was estimated that if the laboratory had submitted its report within 20 days, the investigation would have cost \$1 million less. Most important, delays in reporting DNA results endanger public safety because criminals have more opportunity to reoffend.

7.23 Forensic laboratories around the world have found it a challenge to meet the demand for DNA analysis. The 1996 Bernardo inquiry in Ontario by Justice Campbell, involving the Ontario provincial forensic laboratory, best illustrates the impacts of slow response times for DNA analysis. It took over two years for the DNA results, during which the suspect committed four more rapes and two murders. One recommendation of the inquiry was a 30-day turnaround time for DNA analysis.

Police and prosecutors have concerns about delays in DNA analysis

7.24 The RCMP frequently receives very positive comments on quality of service. However, it has also received numerous complaints from both police investigators and provincial attorneys generals about delays in DNA analysis. Exhibit 7.3 provides examples of negative feedback on DNA delays.

7.25 Our data for the three months ending September 1999 indicate that the average turnaround time for DNA analysis by RCMP laboratories was 101 days (Vancouver and Ottawa laboratories average 171 days). This is significantly longer than Justice Campbell’s recommendation of 30 days. The RCMP completed only 15 percent of its DNA cases within 30 days.

7.26 The backlog represents the number of cases received that have not been fully completed. As of March 1999, the DNA analysis backlog had fallen to 780 cases, down from 917 the previous year. By October 1999, the backlog had been reduced to 633 cases. Wide variations in workload contribute to the backlog. One laboratory had an average backlog of 28 cases per scientist; another had 13. There were individual scientists with backlogs exceeding 50 cases, representing a year’s work.

7.27 The RCMP has taken initial steps to deal with the delays in DNA analysis. It has converted to a second generation of DNA technology. Staff are working with a sense of urgency. The RCMP is now monitoring aspects of DNA performance data at a national level, such as time frames to complete each step, laboratory and individual productivity, and backlogs and workloads. These efforts are focussed on identifying ways to improve efficiency. Officials indicate that resources have been reallocated from other disciplines to DNA analysis, but supporting reports were not available at the time.

Exhibit 7.3

**Examples of Negative
Feedback on DNA Delays**

- “1st degree murder trial . . . DNA [was] crucial evidence for Crown’s case . . . [the] time delay for this type of lab request is far too lengthy. Receiving the lab report the day of the trial is not acceptable.”
- “Testing was not completed in time to be used to obtain DNA warrant and accused was acquitted at trial.”
- “. . . an enormous amount of (police) work could have been eliminated if lab results could have been obtained quicker.”
- “The major concern of . . . the homicide investigators is turnaround time on DNA exhibits. Please continue to focus on reducing this time. It is getting better.”

Source: RCMP Lab
Complaint Files

Waiting for DNA warrants hampers investigations of serious crimes

7.28 In many criminal investigations, police officers seek a DNA warrant to obtain a sample from a suspect to determine whether it matches DNA found at a crime scene. To obtain such a warrant, an investigator must first submit a sample of DNA from the crime scene to a forensic laboratory for “initial screening” to determine if it contains sufficient DNA to compare with a sample from the suspect. Then the investigator must apply to a judge for a warrant to take a sample from the suspect.

7.29 Police investigators using DNA warrants face two delays: the first involves the time taken to do an “initial

screening” prior to obtaining a DNA warrant, and the second involves the turnaround time for the full DNA analysis. The RCMP laboratories take an average of 82 days (as of September 1999) to do the initial screening. However, we found that the actual work, once started, can be completed in two days for straightforward cases. The causes of the delays in initial screening are backlogs and lack of prioritization. When the time for the initial screening is added to the 101 days to complete a DNA analysis, the total time averages 183 days. Exhibit 7.4 shows an example of the consequences of such delays.

7.30 Historically, RCMP laboratories have used fully qualified DNA experts to perform initial screening tests. As a result,

The RCMP laboratories average 82 days to do initial screening for DNA. The actual work takes two days.

Sexual Assault of a Child	
Day 1: 25 October 1998	Police investigators asked the RCMP Forensic Laboratory Services to examine materials found on the victim for the presence of DNA. If found, the investigator would then seek a warrant to take a DNA sample from a known suspect to compare with the DNA removed from the victim.
Day 116: 17 February 1999	The laboratory confirmed the presence of sufficient DNA. The investigator could then obtain a DNA warrant to take a sample from the suspect.
Day 146: 19 March 1999	The investigator provided the laboratory with a sample from the victim to ensure that the DNA being tested was that of the suspect, not the victim.
Day 188: 30 April 1999	The investigator provided the laboratory with a sample from the suspect, obtained under warrant, to determine if it matched the DNA found on the victim.
Day 227: 8 June 1999	The laboratory confirmed that the DNA of the suspect matched the DNA found on the victim. The probability of another person matching this profile was 1 in 1.6 trillion.
Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time taken to obtain sufficient evidence to arrest the suspect – 7.5 months • The time spent in the laboratory before a DNA warrant could be obtained – 4 months • The time for the investigator to submit a DNA warrant sample – 2.5 months • The time spent in the laboratory after a DNA warrant sample was obtained – 1 month • The time taken in the laboratory – 5 months 	
No priority level was assigned to this case.	

Exhibit 7.4

DNA Warrant Sample Delay

Source: RCMP case file

Both police and laboratories have limited DNA analysis to the more serious cases.

the experts have had to juggle their time between initial screening tests and full DNA analysis. Some RCMP laboratories, however, have begun to use screening “specialists” rather than tie up highly qualified — and more expensive — DNA experts on work that does not require their expertise. The effect has been dramatic. The Winnipeg laboratory, using a screening specialist, completes 81 percent of screening tests within 30 days. By contrast, the Vancouver laboratory, which does not follow this practice, completes only 18 percent of screenings within 30 days. With an average screening time of 82 days, police are either suspending their investigations or using more expensive techniques.

7.31 There are no turnaround targets for initial screening tests for DNA warrants that satisfy the needs of the police; nor are there turnaround targets for full DNA analysis that satisfy the needs of the courts. In our view, reduced turnaround times would mean faster, more effective and less costly investigations and court proceedings.

7.32 In consultation with users, the RCMP should establish turnaround targets for initial screening tests for DNA warrants and turnaround targets for DNA analysis. Managers should monitor performance against these targets and take corrective action to improve service.

Laboratories have difficulty managing workload

7.33 Backlogs can occur in any laboratory operation because of increases in workload, insufficient capacity or inefficiency. Strategies to deal with backlogs include prioritizing cases, improving efficiency, contracting out or refusing work, and increasing internal staff.

7.34 The RCMP laboratories have prioritized cases into four levels to reduce backlogs. These range from Priority 1

cases, which are the most urgent (such as murders), to Priority 4 cases, where no prosecution is anticipated. This policy, however, has not been well implemented across all disciplines (biology, chemistry, document analysis, firearms and toxicology). During 1997–98, a majority of cases for all disciplines (11,000 or 56 percent) had not been assigned a priority level. In biology (which includes DNA analysis), an even higher percentage of cases (64 percent) had not been assigned a priority. We found that serious cases in which a suspect had been identified were not being assigned the appropriate priority, and that lower-priority cases were often completed more quickly than higher-priority cases. For example, during 1997–98, cases that had been assigned no priority at all were completed, on average, faster than Priority 1 cases in the disciplines of biology, document analysis and toxicology.

7.35 The time to complete cases varies significantly among disciplines and locations. For example, laboratory performance reports show that the Edmonton laboratory completes 85 percent of its document analysis cases within 30 days but only seven percent of its toxicology cases (see Exhibit 7.5). The same reports show that the Edmonton laboratory completes 91 percent of its firearms cases within 30 days, but the Vancouver laboratory completes only 53 percent within this period.

7.36 Although scientists try their best to respond to urgent investigative requirements, individual efforts alone have been unable to deal quickly with all high-priority cases. For DNA cases completed during the three months ending September 1999, only 35 percent of Priority 1 cases were completed within 30 days.

7.37 The other approach that the RCMP laboratories have used to handle backlogs is to restrict the number of cases they take. At times, both police and

laboratories have limited DNA analysis to the more serious cases (for example, murder and sexual assault). However, other jurisdictions have had success in reducing crime by using DNA analysis for a broader range of cases, including break and enter.

7.38 While the RCMP is having difficulty providing timely DNA analysis, it responds to requests from coroners and medical examiners to perform toxicology analysis for non-criminal cases. These requests are outside the RCMP’s mandate and are performed free of charge. It is estimated that this work represents about one third of the toxicology caseload for the Halifax and Winnipeg laboratories. This is not a new issue. Our 1990 Report noted that the RCMP was performing work outside of its mandate, but little action has been taken.

7.39 The RCMP should ensure that priorities are set for all cases and high-priority cases are handled first. All discretionary activity should be reviewed and budgets reallocated.

A national forensic advisory committee is needed

7.40 The need for RCMP services extends beyond the specific requirements of the Force. Other levels of government and members of the law enforcement community rely on the services provided. It is important that users have the opportunity for input in establishing targets and that they receive feedback on

results. In the 1998 inquiry into the wrongful conviction of Guy Paul Morin, Justice Kaufman recommended that an advisory committee of outside stakeholders be established to provide this necessary feedback to the Ontario Centre of Forensic Sciences.

7.41 At present, investigators and scientists consult with each other mainly on a case-by-case basis. There is no formal mechanism for national consultations on issues such as timeliness of service, priority setting and efficiency of operations. In our 1990 audit, we recommended that the RCMP establish an advisory committee of stakeholders.

7.42 The RCMP should establish a national forensic advisory committee.

Quality must be maintained

7.43 It is crucial that forensic work be of high quality because errors could result in guilty individuals going free and innocent individuals being wrongfully incarcerated. Experience has shown that weak quality control in forensic laboratories can raise serious doubts about the integrity of the criminal justice system. For example, the Kaufman Inquiry into the wrongful conviction of Guy Paul Morin looked at concerns about the quality of casework by the Ontario Centre of Forensic Sciences.

7.44 Our review of client-feedback questionnaires found that clients were pleased with the quality of service that individual scientists were providing. The laboratory managers informed us that over

Users should have the opportunity to establish targets.

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Exhibit 7.5

Percentage of Forensic Cases Completed Within 30 Days

	Alcohol	Biology	Chemistry	Document Analysis	Firearms	Toxicology
Edmonton	57	33	39	85	91	7
Vancouver	84	29	72	48	53	30

Source: 1998–1999 Laboratory performance reports

the last two years they had not received any complaints about the quality of the scientific work.

7.45 RCMP laboratories are seeking accreditation by the Standards Council of Canada. However, progress toward accreditation has been proceeding much more slowly than planned and is now about two years behind original expectations. This is due in part to requirements to document the laboratory processes in detail, as part of the accreditation process. The methodology manuals for some disciplines were incomplete or out of date and this is a contributing factor in the length of time accreditation is taking.

7.46 Proficiency testing is an important element of quality assurance, and RCMP laboratories have policies covering this area. All laboratories conduct proficiency tests under the direction of the Chief Scientists. However, we found that the proficiency testing program is not adequately implemented or monitored. As a result, senior management has no assurance that the quality assurance program is operating as intended.

7.47 The RCMP should ensure quality in its laboratories by timely accreditation, documentation of methodology and full implementation of the proficiency testing program.

Rationale for the number of laboratories is lacking

7.48 In our 1990 audit, we questioned the rationale for the number of laboratories and their locations. More specifically, we questioned the need for maintaining a firearms capability in every location. By comparison, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) handles firearms issues or major cases from a single central laboratory that covers the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico to Alaska.

7.49 In 1990 we also questioned the need for three laboratories in the Prairies and recommended that future decisions to build laboratories consider the costs and benefits that would flow from rationalization. Nevertheless, in 1995 the RCMP opened a new laboratory in Regina at a cost of \$12 million and made it full-service, including firearms. In 1999 it completed the construction of a new replacement laboratory in Ottawa, with total costs estimated at \$21.5 million. The RCMP did not do a cost/benefit analysis for the new Ottawa laboratory, stating in an internal memorandum, “Because funding for this project was the result of a Treasury Board initiative to alleviate health and safety issues and not an actual new full service laboratory, a cost/benefit study need not be conducted.”

7.50 In 1997, the RCMP set up a task force to review forensic laboratories. The task force observed that the RCMP could save money by reducing the number of laboratories and operating fewer but larger facilities.

7.51 The task force concluded, among other things, that “to sustain six delivery locations does not realize the significant potentials to gain in economy, efficiency and effectiveness . . . resources allocated to administration and management and maintenance of buildings make no direct contribution to priorities.” Efficiencies realized through operating fewer but larger facilities could free up resources for reallocation to enhance service.

7.52 The task force analyzed a number of options. For example, it concluded that reducing the number of laboratories in the Prairies from three to one larger laboratory would yield annual savings of over \$1 million. The savings would be derived largely from a reduction in management and administrative overhead and building expenses.

7.53 The potential savings calculated by the task force focussed on reduced overhead, support and building

maintenance. However, the potential savings could be even higher because the task force did not consider either the need for periodic capital spending or the underutilization of equipment. Since each of the six RCMP laboratories is a full-service laboratory, much of the investment in buildings and equipment is duplicated. For example, the RCMP maintains six firing ranges, and several laboratories have equipment costing approximately \$225,000 per laboratory for measuring the velocity of bullets. The task force did not examine either the utilization rate of these devices and other major equipment or whether the existing inventory would still be needed if services were provided out of fewer but larger laboratories. We believe that if it had examined these issues, its estimate of potential savings would have been higher.

7.54 Between 1993–94 and 1998–99, the forensic laboratories spent approximately \$40 million on equipment and facilities, including the cost of replacing its laboratories in Regina and Ottawa. In our view, the recent construction of the Regina and Ottawa facilities was a lost opportunity for the RCMP to rationalize its laboratories.

Performance measurement and management remain a problem

7.55 The performance measurement systems are weak. Insufficient management direction and support from the field have resulted in incomplete, inconsistent and unreliable data. Stakeholders have little information on the level of service at laboratories, and laboratory management does not have the required information on efficiency of specific disciplines at individual laboratories. The RCMP, in conjunction with the stakeholders, needs to develop measurable performance targets.

7.56 The lack of information is reflected in the RCMP’s performance reports. Each laboratory and discipline,

and the forensic laboratories as a whole, prepares these reports; however, we did not find them useful for assessing year-to-year changes in performance and reasons for these changes. At the departmental level, the portion of the RCMP’s 1999 Performance Report dealing with forensic laboratories contained discrepancies. In comparing year-to-year data with the data that we were given, the number of cases handled and the number of staff did not reconcile. In addition, the replacement of the Ottawa laboratory (\$11 million in 1998–99 and \$21.5 million in total) was included in one table but not in others.

7.57 Information on level of service is an essential tool for managers to improve service. Other forensic laboratories in the United Kingdom and Sweden have developed effective performance measurement systems for monitoring the level of service and providing stakeholders with information on results.

7.58 **The RCMP should ensure that its information management system is fully implemented and its performance reporting is improved.**

Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC)

CPIC is the backbone of the criminal justice system

7.59 CPIC is a system that provides police officers across Canada with key information that they need in pursuing criminals and working to preserve public safety. Through CPIC, the police have immediate access by radio or computer to systems that contain a wide range of critical data, including vehicle and drivers’ licences, criminal records, stolen vehicles and boats, and lists of wanted persons (see Exhibit 7.6). These systems also contain data on missing persons and property, penitentiary inmates, parolees, dental files, and a registry of wandering persons (Alzheimer’s sufferers, for example) and missing children. CPIC is

The performance measurement systems are weak.

CPIC is a system that provides police officers across Canada with key information that they need in pursuing criminals and working to preserve public safety.

also connected with the U.S. National Crime Information Center and individual U.S. state databases.

7.60 The courts, parole boards and government departments and agencies, such as Correctional Service Canada and Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, also use CPIC for a variety of purposes. It is the primary tool for identifying suspects in crimes, accessing outstanding warrants and restraining orders, screening out pedophiles from jobs involving contact with children, flagging dangerous offenders, and identifying missing persons. CPIC is also a key element in enabling the expanded Canadian Firearms Registry to be accessed nationally. Any malfunctioning of CPIC directly compromises the ability of police and others in the law enforcement community to operate.

Availability of CPIC is a concern

7.61 The impetus for CPIC began with a federal/provincial initiative to fight organized crime in 1966. The system consists of a main computer, a communications network, and the local hardware and software that provide users with access to the network. It was

originally designed to handle 11 million transactions annually and to accommodate 1,500 points of access. In 1998 the system handled 114 million transactions, 10 times its original design volume. It currently handles more than 15,000 points of access and serves 1,285 police departments and government agencies.

7.62 Even with this growth in demand, users are generally satisfied with the completeness and accuracy of the information that the system provides — when it is operating. The periodic uncontrolled shutdowns cause delays, backlogs and a waste of resources. Numerous reports have noted that the system is “grounded in the technologies of the 1960s, resulting in the system being increasingly at risk of breaking down, and of unauthorized access, given current usage and anticipated demands.” There are serious concerns among users about its reliability.

7.63 The RCMP is not routinely measuring and monitoring system availability and is unable to provide us with information for previous years. This is not the case in other jurisdictions. Both the United States (FBI) and United Kingdom (U.K.) systems are monitored and available 99 percent of the time. In

Exhibit 7.6

A Typical CPIC User Scenario

A Vancouver police officer noted a car with Ontario licence plates, parked suspiciously behind a warehouse complex at 2:30 a.m. He immediately contacted his local CPIC (Canadian Police Information Centre) terminal operator by radio. The officer described the car and licence plate and requested a CPIC vehicle file query. In less than 60 seconds, he was informed that the car had been stolen eight days earlier in Halifax. The licence plates had been stolen recently in Toronto. He summoned assistance and maintained observation until other police officers arrived. Soon afterward, two men were apprehended as they entered the vehicle. Descriptions of both men were relayed to CPIC for a query of the wanted persons records. Quick system responses revealed that one individual was wanted for robbery and fraud. The other, a dangerous criminal, was wanted by forces throughout Canada for a series of violent crimes.

Messages to confirm all incriminating information with the originating agencies were then sent through CPIC communications. Meanwhile, a search of the stolen vehicle produced useful supporting evidence: restricted firearms and assorted “customized” burglary tools.

Although police officers always proceed with caution, information related to a high-risk situation or person can give them advance warning of impending problems. It can also help to locate and arrest criminals at large, before they can cause further harm. Poor information in the CPIC system or inability to access it has obvious implications for police officers and the public.

Source: The CPIC System and Network (RCMP Publication)

the U.K., users and senior management are provided with daily information on such areas as system volume, speed of response, system availability and the nature of any interruptions. There are also target rates for response times. The availability of such data would have helped to support the replacement of the present CPIC system.

7.64 In an RCMP study completed in 1999, the project team working on replacing CPIC noted that the network was available only about 89 percent of the time. It was shut down regionally or nationally for about 880 hours per year. Each of these outages affected from 541 to 20,000 law enforcement officers (depending on the size of the area affected). Outages have prevented officers from making almost three million queries and have resulted in almost \$13 million in productive time lost. In addition, the central computer mainframe was down about 75 hours, which affected some 20,000 officers and almost a million queries, and represented about \$5 million in productive time lost. The study concluded that there is a “high probability that availability of CPIC information to front line law enforcement will decrease further.”

7.65 The RCMP should establish targets for response rates and regularly monitor and report on the availability of the CPIC system.

CPIC is not meeting clients’ needs

7.66 The existing system cannot accommodate emerging information sources and the new information formats, which improve data analysis and search capability. Most of the suggested changes or upgrades to CPIC put forward by its users in a recent RCMP survey were in four key categories:

- access to additional sources of information, including other jurisdictions’ crime databases and federal and provincial databases;

- improved data analysis and search capability, such as the ability to access and analyze fingerprints and to conduct off-line searches;

- additional CPIC functions that are used to analyze, correlate and match crimes to others with similar characteristics (for example, the creation of new files dealing with such issues as gangs and their methods of operation); and

- better security features such as data encryption and better user authentication to prevent unauthorized access to the system.

7.67 CPIC users are also concerned about the system’s continuing operation. Some provincial jurisdictions have indicated that they would develop their own information systems to perform CPIC’s functions if the system is not renewed. This would result in unnecessary costs, duplication and difficulties in sharing information. We believe that a national role in co-ordinating, maintaining and operating such a system is essential.

Funding for reinvestment in CPIC was not available internally

7.68 In 1988, the RCMP commissioned an external study into the need to update CPIC, and in late 1993 the CPIC Advisory Committee supported a review and redesign of the system to meet future requirements. A project team was established in 1994. Since 1994, three Solicitors General have been briefed on the need for replacement. The Minister of Justice was briefed in 1998 on the importance of CPIC in allowing police forces to access the expanded Canadian Firearms Registry.

7.69 Longer-term investment decisions to renew CPIC were ranked along with decisions about immediate operational needs. For example, in 1998, the project to replace CPIC was ranked 21st on the list of internal RCMP priorities. The project was in a similar

In 1988, the RCMP commissioned an external study into the need to update CPIC. The RCMP finally received the funds to replace the CPIC system in April 1999.

Until the new CPIC system is fully operational and stable, the question remains as to how well the current system will function.

position for the two previous years. Other projects were deemed more essential to the operation of the Force. These projects consumed virtually all of the RCMP’s discretionary spending, leaving nothing to revitalize CPIC. The RCMP finally received the funds to replace the CPIC system in April 1999.

7.70 Because the replacement project has been delayed for nearly 10 years, there is uncertainty about whether the existing system will be able to function until the new system is ready. Out of the estimated total budget of \$114.7 million for CPIC renewal, the RCMP will need to spend \$32.7 million on the first stage, a large part of which will go toward stabilizing the existing system. This will enable it to operate until the new one becomes functional.

7.71 Although the approved budget for the project is \$114 million, this figure represents only the “out-of-pocket” costs that the RCMP will incur to upgrade the system. There are also costs of \$270 million that other federal and provincial systems will incur, so that they can connect to the new services to be provided by the modernized CPIC. The ongoing operating costs of the new system will not change appreciably from the current system.

7.72 The RCMP should develop a strategy to ensure long-term, timely reinvestment in CPIC.

The CPIC system is finally being renewed

7.73 The project team has now started to develop the new system. The project has been divided into four subprojects and funding approval has been granted for the first one. This subproject is intended to stabilize the operation of the current system. Execution of the other subprojects will be staggered and they will each require funding approval to proceed. They will enhance the capability of the CPIC system to provide additional services not

previously possible with the old technology.

7.74 The project is in the early stages. It has encountered a few problems in getting started, and is two months behind the original project schedule. This is because staff are planning the four subprojects at the same time, so they will be ready to proceed as soon as funding becomes available.

7.75 Until the new CPIC system is fully operational and stable, the question remains as to how well the current system will function until the transition to the new system. This is a situation that management needs to monitor closely.

7.76 The RCMP should inform Parliament of the availability of the current CPIC system until the new one becomes operational.

Canadian Firearms Registry

7.77 Since 1934, Canadians have been required to register handguns. About 1.2 million were listed in the Canadian Firearms Registry prior to introduction of the *Firearms Act*. However, it is estimated that up to half of the records in the system were incorrect because the owners had moved, or the guns had been stolen, sold or destroyed.

7.78 The new *Firearms Act*, which came into force 1 December 1998, established a national firearms system to license owners and to register firearms. Gun owners have until 1 January 2001 to obtain a valid licence, and until 1 January 2003 to register all their firearms.

7.79 The Canadian Firearm Registry is part of the RCMP’s services to the law enforcement community. It is funded by the Department of Justice under the Canadian Firearms program. At 1 December 1999, the RCMP portion of the resources comprised 404 full-time-equivalent positions and expenditures of approximately \$19.1 million. The Department of Justice estimates that the

cost of the system over five years for development and start-up will be \$120 million, with annual operating costs of \$50 million to \$60 million.

Firearms registration has had a limited impact on CPIC

7.80 The Canadian Firearms Registry had a difficult start because the systems and processes had not been fully tested before the Registry was implemented. In May 1999, a consultant's study found that the Firearms Registry was unable to cope with the backlogs even though the number of applications was much lower than forecast. Of the 41,500 licence applications received, only 5,600 were completed. Of the 29,500 firearms registration applications received, only 600 were completed.

7.81 The Department of Justice indicated that 500,000 licences had been issued by 1 February 2000. It estimated that 1.7 million owners remain to be licensed by 1 January 2001. Over 300,000 firearms had been registered, with 6 million to 10 million to be registered by 1 January 2003.

7.82 We did not audit this area in depth because the legislation was new and operations at the Department of Justice and the RCMP were just starting. However, we determined that the slow rate of licensing and registration indicates a limited impact on CPIC to date.

Criminal History Records

7.83 The RCMP maintains over 2.8 million criminal history records. These records account for much of the information that law enforcement agencies routinely access through the Canadian Police Information Centre. The information is used by police officers in their day-to-day operations and is shared with Interpol and the FBI.

7.84 Criminal history records and fingerprints are the pieces of evidence

introduced most often as exhibits in criminal cases in the Canadian courts. They are used for identification purposes, sentencing decisions, bail hearings, paroles and pardons. They are also used in penitentiaries to assist in developing rehabilitation plans for prisoners. Security checks and reliability screenings are run against the 2.8 million records.

7.85 In 1997, as a result of Program Review, the RCMP began to convert the 2.8 million microfilmed criminal history records to digital images. This resulted in a reduction of 35 full-time-equivalent personnel who had worked with the old microfiche-based system. Service to clients has improved dramatically because criminal records can be retrieved in seconds by computer. The conversion of all microfiche was completed successfully by 31 March 1999.

The backlog is unacceptable

7.86 Although criminal history records are invaluable and readily accessible, they are not current; a significant backlog of information is waiting to be processed. There are delays of more than two months in entering records of new criminals and new crimes of "old" criminals into the system, and some files have taken over five months. The RCMP has not set targets for acceptable levels of service.

7.87 The reason for the backlog is a lack of available funds to hire staff to speed up the processing of records. However, opportunities to reinvest revenues resulting from cost recovery have not been taken. For example, we found that through an administrative oversight, the RCMP did not collect its share of certain revenues from 1995–96 to 1997–98 under a cost recovery agreement with the National Parole Board. As a result of this oversight, which was discovered in 1999, the RCMP gave up more than \$1.2 million to the government's general coffers that it could have used to improve national services.

Although criminal history records are invaluable and readily accessible, they are not current; a significant backlog of information is waiting to be processed.

The RCMP has received complaints from the police and the courts about delays in fingerprint identification.

7.88 Like the delays in DNA analysis, any backlog of criminal history information can have serious implications for the police, courts, parole boards and others if they do not have current information on recent crimes.

7.89 Another area of concern is delays in responding to security checks. Those affected by waiting for results include volunteers who apply to work with children, and applicants for visas, citizenship and landed immigrant status, and jobs in the public and private sectors. Standards or targets are needed to provide a basis for review and to set out corrective action.

7.90 There was a shortfall of \$2.7 million in the salary budget for the criminal records function, which represents salaries for about 80 full-time staff. The shortfall for the current fiscal year was covered temporarily, but budgets need to be set to provide necessary service.

7.91 The RCMP should establish turnaround targets and determine the systems, processes and resources

required to eliminate the backlog for criminal history records.

Fingerprint Identification

7.92 The RCMP maintains fingerprints for each of the approximately 2.8 million criminal history records that it manages. In 1998–99, the Force conducted about 260,000 fingerprint searches. Another 28,600 fingerprints from crime scenes were processed and compared against prints in the database, resulting in the identification of 6,700 criminals (see Exhibits 7.7 and 7.8).

The backlog is a concern

7.93 The backlog for entering new fingerprints into the system and checking fingerprints has been increasing substantially since January 1997, when it stood at about 5,500. Two years later, at December 1998, the backlog had grown to about 25,000. As a result, turnaround times have increased from about 10 days in 1997 to about 25 days in 1999 and are continuing to increase. The RCMP has not set targets for acceptable turnaround times.

7.94 The RCMP has received complaints about delays in fingerprint

Exhibit 7.7

A Single Fingerprint Can Lead to Numerous Convictions

Source: RCMP Performance Report to Parliament, 1998–99

On 28 February 1995, two shots were fired from a stolen van on a Montreal street, killing a man in a nearby car. The van was soon recovered, along with a single latent fingerprint on a map in the van. The print was transmitted to the central site in Ottawa. Within the hour, the gunman had been identified. When confronted with the evidence of the fingerprint identification, he agreed to become an informant. He was also convicted of five counts of murder, 13 counts of conspiracy to commit murder, and various weapon offences. His testimony aided in the arrest and conviction of numerous gang members.

Exhibit 7.8

Award for Excellence

Source: RCMP Quarterly, Fall 1995 (RCMP Publication)

In 1994, the RCMP received a “Hit of the Year” award from Printrak International (an equipment supplier). The award was for solving a gruesome murder case in New Brunswick in only two days, by lifting a crime-scene print and checking against the fingerprint database. The murderer was not one of the four suspects the RCMP had initially identified. He had left New Brunswick and, through the use of fingerprint technology, was located in the Hamilton region. The RCMP said more murders were likely if the individual had not been apprehended. He had already committed a murder before going to New Brunswick.

identification from the police and the courts. We understand that some delays result from the police and other agencies submitting poor-quality prints for analysis. Other delays may arise from internal mailroom bottlenecks and large batches of prints submitted at the same time. However, if the system is to be effective, the backlog must be eliminated promptly. This would assist in identifying criminals more quickly and, in turn, would reduce the cost of investigations.

7.95 The RCMP should establish turnaround targets and determine the systems, processes and resources required to eliminate the backlog in fingerprint identification.

Criminal Intelligence Service Canada

7.96 Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC) is a service that unites Canadian police agencies in the fight against organized crime. The purpose of CISC is to enable all Canadian law enforcement agencies to share intelligence and to promote co-operation among them.

7.97 Organized crime is a multi-billion dollar phenomenon that affects all Canadians. It undermines the domestic economy and poses a threat to society. Since organized crime is continuing to grow at a substantial rate, a co-ordinated effort by law enforcement agencies is essential.

Criminal intelligence is increasingly important

7.98 CISC consists of a Central Bureau located in Ottawa with a budget of less than \$1 million and a complement of 15 staff. It also has nine staff on secondment from, and funded by, police agencies and government departments involved in criminal intelligence. The organization is linked to nine bureaus across Canada, which supply a total of 98 additional staff and are funded from

federal, provincial and municipal resources.

7.99 In March 1999, CISC entered into an agreement with a private software company to further develop a computer data bank (the Automated Criminal Intelligence Information System — ACIIS II).

7.100 The total number of agencies using ACIIS II is increasing, with 347 using it in 1998 and 378 in 1999. The support and use of ACIIS II as a national system continue to grow. The Solicitor General supported it in his National Action Plan on Organized Crime. Some partners, such as Ontario, Quebec and the RCMP Criminal Intelligence Branch, have chosen to maintain their own systems and must therefore enter duplicate data into ACIIS II and their own systems. While organized crime has become more globalized with increasingly sophisticated technology during the last decade, CISC’s budget has remained static at about \$1 million.

7.101 Solicitor General Canada noted in its 1998 “National Action Plan on Organized Crime” that current resources are not adequate to complete the ACIIS II project and maintain the system over the long term. It recommended that “the federal and provincial governments should allocate more resources to enhancing the capacity of CISC and support the full development and implementation of the ACIIS II computer system.”

7.102 CISC has also been working internationally to lay the groundwork for joint research in the area of Organized Crime Prevention. While a proposal has been written, including costing and timelines, CISC continues to explore ways of acquiring funding for this project. In addition, CISC has a variety of training aids and courses whose offerings are dependent on resources. Its national workshop is currently operating at a deficit, and last year only three of its

While organized crime has become more globalized with increasingly sophisticated technology during the last decade, the budget of Criminal Intelligence Service Canada has remained static at about \$1 million.

criminal intelligence courses were offered due to a shortfall.

7.103 The RCMP should review the current efforts by all partners of Criminal Intelligence Service Canada in light of its overall strategy for dealing with organized crime.

Canadian Police College

7.104 The Canadian Police College provides management and technical training to Canadian and foreign police personnel. Technical courses cover topics such as fingerprinting and bomb disposal. The College also conducts and co-ordinates research to identify trends in policing, and distributes information on topical issues. During 1998–99, the College had a staff of 89, provided training to 1,832 participants and earned almost \$2.5 million in revenue.

7.105 In 1990 we were critical of the College’s training in two respects. First, its management training was not well respected in Canada. The course for senior management was mainly a repeat of the preceding course for more junior levels. Most individuals preferred the course given in the United States by the FBI. We also noted that the College offered nothing for those in the upper management levels of police organizations, such as chiefs of police. This kind of program is important because the management skills required to run police organizations effectively are not necessarily learned in progressing through the ranks.

7.106 Our second concern in 1990 was that the course curriculum was more reflective of a technical training college for police. For example, numerous offerings such as “train the trainer” courses could be easily obtained elsewhere across Canada. We recommended that the College widen its advisory committee membership to include people from other teaching institutions, such as retired university

chancellors and business school faculty. Such an advisory committee could help the College broaden its perspective on how to improve the quality of its management course offerings.

Change has been slow

7.107 In 1995 the College carried out a study of its purpose, role and activities, a survey of the Canadian police community and a staff survey.

7.108 In 1998 the College evaluated 21 of its courses. The evaluation recommended that seven be discontinued and that the two management courses be modified within a new management leadership program. The College has also started to establish the Canadian Association of Police Academy Directors to develop a national training strategy.

7.109 In 1994 the College moved to a cost recovery model for its training courses. This change in approach has affected the College and its clientele both positively and negatively. Once clients had to pay to attend courses, their identification of who and how many should attend improved significantly; this permitted the College to improve its course planning and scheduling. There were fewer cancellations and fuller classrooms and residences, which enabled the College to deliver training services more cost-effectively. However, while the College has significantly increased its revenue over the past year, it is still more than \$1 million short of this year’s target of \$3.5 million.

7.110 The move to cost recovery has not been without its problems. Although advance notice was given to clients so they could budget accordingly, many police forces see the change as a downloading of costs to their jurisdictions. Given the current budgetary problems that many police forces are facing, a number of these forces are sending fewer students than they did previously.

7.111 The Canadian Police College has remained embedded in a model of

traditional classroom learning at the college campus. It needs to reflect new models of learning organizations and knowledge management. It also needs to respond to emerging trends in technology, legislation, user needs and demographic changes in its clientele.

7.112 It is important that the College make the necessary changes to ensure that its relevance as a training institution is not eroded further. It recently proposed a new business model that will address such issues as governance, financial structure (including cost recovery), advisory committees, partnerships with universities and other police training agencies, increasing its client base, and alternative approaches to both the curriculum and the methods of delivery. These are steps in the right direction.

7.113 The Canadian Police College should implement the changes it has proposed to transform its approach.

Reporting Information

Reporting of information is weak

7.114 We found minimal financial and performance information on the RCMP business line that it calls “National Police Services”. Information in the RCMP’s Performance Report was scant, and inconsistent with what we obtained from other sources. The RCMP Report on Plans and Priorities shows that these services spend \$189 million, almost half of it for informatics. In reality, only a small portion of informatics spending is for services to the Canadian law enforcement community.

7.115 We found that supporting information was not available. It was difficult to get a breakdown of specific expenditures, especially in such areas as informatics, capital expenditures and firearms registration. For example, in billing the Department of Justice for the cost of operating the Canadian Firearms Registry, staff had to create a spreadsheet in order to prepare invoices, rather than rely on the financial and human resources system.

7.116 There was no historical information in many areas to permit trend analysis of expenditures. Information the RCMP provided to Parliament in its 1998–99 Report on Plans and Priorities (Part III Estimates) was inconsistent with that contained in its internal business plan (see Exhibit 7.9). It was also inconsistent with other information we obtained from the RCMP. For example, while the Report on Plans and Priorities reported 1,693 full-time-equivalent staff (FTEs) in the organizational units within the business line, the business plan specified 925 FTEs, and the human resources system 1,255 FTEs.

7.117 The RCMP should improve the information it reports to Parliament.

Collaborative Arrangements

Responsibility for funding is not clear

7.118 The RCMP has been providing services to the law enforcement community for almost a century. Fingerprint and criminal history records bureaus came into being in 1908. The first forensic laboratory was established in 1937.

The Canadian Police College has remained embedded in a model of traditional classroom learning.

	1998–99 Report on Plans and Priorities Provided to Parliament	RCMP Internal 1998–99 National Police Services Business Plan
Capital	\$ 26.5 million	\$ 1.9 million
Total Expenditures	\$ 189 million	\$ 58 million
FTEs*	1,693	925

Exhibit 7.9

Differences in National Police Services Information

* full-time-equivalent staff

The federal government and the provinces recently agreed to share the costs of biology casework (essentially DNA analysis).

7.119 In 1966, the federal government and the provinces met to address their concerns about organized crime. From those meetings, an understanding emerged that old services such as fingerprint identification and criminal history records should be strengthened and a new system like CPIC should be added. CPIC would make it possible for the police as well as others to access a range of data banks by radio, 24 hours a day. The federal government provided the funding for that initiative. In the more than 30 years since that conference, there have been changes in the services needed and in the funding arrangements.

7.120 The six RCMP laboratories are paid for by the federal government; however, the main beneficiaries are the provinces. On the one hand, over 85 percent of the casework is for provincial and municipal agencies. On the other hand, areas such as the DNA data bank, examination of counterfeit currency and travel documents, quality assurance, and forensic research and development are clearly national responsibilities.

7.121 The federal government took part of the responsibility for funding these services in 1966. The provinces and municipalities were responsible for the costs of collecting and entering most of the data. However, tensions have persisted between the levels of government about the level of services provided and the responsibility for funding. There have been new arrangements on some issues but the 1966 understanding has not been revisited. Arrangements for individual services are being developed, leaving a patchwork of arrangements, lack of clarity on funding and lack of collaboration on all the services.

7.122 The federal government and the provinces recently agreed to share the costs of biology casework (essentially DNA analysis). Starting in 2001, the provinces will pay 55 percent of the average national RCMP cost per biology

case for designated offences. As Ontario and Quebec have their own laboratories, the federal government will reimburse them 20 percent of the average costs for their casework in this area. The federal government will be responsible for the creation and funding of the national DNA data bank and the DNA analysis of samples obtained from designated convicted offenders in the provinces.

7.123 The government should ensure that agreement is reached with all stakeholders on the national services needed, funding arrangements, structure and accountability.

No mechanism exists to manage these services as a business line

7.124 The overall management of the national services needs to be improved. Each service — laboratories, identification (fingerprints and criminal history records), firearms registration, the Police College and criminal intelligence — essentially manages its own area. The services lack a common identity. There is a need to improve the mechanism for deciding where to allocate scarce resources. Would laboratory funds be better used to reduce the criminal history records backlog or to do more criminal intelligence work? Should new services like forensic analysis of computers be added? There is no national advisory committee that can provide advice on which services are required, the levels of service, funding needs and arrangements, allocation of scarce resources and the need for new services.

7.125 This area has been reviewed a number of times over the past decade, including:

- 1990 Report of the Auditor General, Chapter 27
- 1997 Solicitor General’s Report on National Police Services
- 1998–99 RCMP Alignment Initiative (on forensic laboratories)

- 1999 Treasury Board Resource Review of the RCMP.

There is a need to move forward and to respond to the recommendations made by these reviews.

7.126 The RCMP should consolidate its national services and establish a common identity with unified operational and strategic planning across the business line.

Conclusion

7.127 The RCMP provides a range of services that are essential to the Canadian law enforcement community. These services include fingerprint identification, criminal history records, forensic analysis, criminal intelligence and on-line access to data banks such as vehicle registration and drivers' licences. The efficiency and effectiveness of many aspects of law enforcement rely on timeliness and quality of service.

7.128 The RCMP has taken a number of initiatives to improve service. For example, its effort to keep the 30-year-old CPIC system operational and handling substantially higher volumes than it was designed to do is commendable. It has also introduced DNA analysis, which has had a significant impact on police investigations and prosecutions, and it is developing a DNA data bank and an automotive paint database. After recent upgrades, fingerprint identification and criminal history records both require less clerical assistance to function. Unlike systems in other jurisdictions, these services contain the fingerprints and records of all criminals sentenced in Canada. Finally, the CPIC Advisory Committee is an excellent example of effective user input.

7.129 The levels of service that the RCMP provides do not meet the needs of its clients. For example, CPIC is unavailable 11 percent of the time. DNA

analysis takes too long and is limited to only the most important cases.

Accordingly, its full potential to cut the costs of police investigations is not being realized. Backlogs of up to two months exist for criminal history records and fingerprints waiting to be input to data banks. Therefore, the records and fingerprint data available to the police and others are not current. As well, criminal record checks required by employers or volunteer organizations take too long.

7.130 Users of the services often cannot provide input into the management of these services. For example, CPIC has an excellent advisory committee but forensic laboratories do not have one at all. Where there are such committees, the membership is mainly police, although courts, corrections, parole boards and the public are also users of these services.

7.131 Some services are not run efficiently. In forensic laboratories, cases are not prioritized. Less urgent cases are often completed ahead of urgent cases, and caseloads and backlogs vary widely among the laboratories. There are questions of whether the RCMP needs six full-service laboratories and why it built new laboratories in Ottawa and Regina without thoroughly analyzing the potential for rationalizing laboratory services and the potential benefits.

7.132 Tremendous potential exists to strengthen the criminal justice system by improving these services. For example, having the results of DNA analysis routinely available when investigators have just begun their work would significantly reduce investigation costs and improve public safety.

7.133 Our 1990 audit raised questions about the management of these services, the need to rationalize forensic laboratories, performance measurement, the need for user input and planning for the future. This audit showed that the same concerns still exist:

The RCMP has taken a number of initiatives to improve service, but the levels of service that it provides do not always meet the needs of its clients.

Tremendous potential exists to strengthen the criminal justice system by improving these services.

- There is no advisory committee for laboratories.
- Methodology manuals are not up-to-date.
- Performance measurement is weak.
- A strong identity and integrated management are needed.

7.134 If these services are to meet the needs of the law enforcement community and contribute to public safety, changes are necessary. These changes include better management, a clear vision of the current and future direction of the services, adequate resources, collaboration among all the stakeholders to determine who should pay and what level of service they should expect in return, and a heightened sense of urgency to resolve the concerns.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s overall response: *The RCMP concurs, in general, with the recommendations and observations made in the chapter and appreciates the co-operation that we received from your Office.*

The chapter includes observations that: the levels of service provided by National Police Services (NPS) do not meet all of its clients’ needs; senior management should ensure that appropriate action is taken to eliminate backlogs in many of the services and to improve efficiency; the 1966 arrangement between the federal government and the provinces for these services should be reassessed; and consideration should be given to the establishment of a national forensic advisory committee and to the development and measurement of performance standards.

First, the RCMP, through NPS, provides a set of essential national services to all members of Canada’s law enforcement community. It should be noted that part of the problem with backlogs in many of the services was due to a systematic underfunding of these services that was

brought about, in part, by the balancing of scarce resources with priorities and health and safety concerns. Additional resources will have to be allocated accordingly.

We have included, for your information, brief comments from each of the NPS areas discussed in the chapter, as follows:

Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC)

CISC is pleased with the chapter’s emphasis on the Automated Criminal Intelligence Information System (ACIIS II), which CISC continues to develop and promote as Canada’s national criminal intelligence system in the fight against organized crime.

The chapter states that the budget for CISC has remained static at approximately \$1 million annually despite the globalization of organized crime and increasingly sophisticated technology. We agree with this statement and consider that additional resources to fund and share the right intelligence among partners in Canadian law enforcement agencies will go a long way to combat organized crime.

Forensic Laboratory Services Directorate (FLSD)

The FLSD acknowledges the findings of the Auditor General’s review of forensic laboratories. A meeting of the Directorate’s senior managers was held to discuss and find ways of improving the service delivery to the clients. Issues resulting from discussions were divided into a short-term work plan and long-term projects. The short-term work plan includes the following action items:

- *Laboratory management will monitor and enforce the use of the priority system and the adherence to diary dates. There will be a continued triage of cases by priority and there will be ongoing dialogue with users. A high priority will be given to cases where laboratory reports are required to seek a DNA warrant.*

- A national caseload controller has been appointed.
- After allowing jurisdictions that do not have alternative service providers some time to make alternative arrangements, requests for toxicology analysis in non-Criminal Code cases will no longer be accepted by RCMP laboratories; this will allow resources to be redeployed to DNA or other priority areas.
- An advisory committee will be established.

Long-term projects focus primarily on the delivery of service within the entire Directorate. They will likely include the consolidation of some services and the creation of centres of specialization, as well as improvements in management information systems and performance monitoring. A team is presently being formed to implement changes in an expeditious manner, progressively and within a maximum three-year time frame. The project manager will be required to conduct progress reports and to provide these to the Senior Executive on a quarterly basis.

Canadian Police College (CPC)

A new business model for the Canadian Police College was recently developed and submitted for discussion. Concrete actions have since been taken. The College will be a knowledge-based establishment dedicated to advancing the policing profession. As indicated by the Office of the Auditor General, the content of the new business model is regarded as “steps in the right direction”.

The CPC was slow to change in the early 1990s due to many demands of a financial nature that had to be met in very tight time frames (e.g. Program Review and Cost Recovery). By mid-decade, the management of the CPC realized that a strategic direction was necessary to manage the changes that continue to challenge the College.

The management of the CPC acknowledges the shortcomings raised in the chapter. Difficult decisions in the area of human resources will have to be made so that the College can secure a strong foundation to meet new challenges.

Information and Identification Services

The comments in the chapter on the vulnerability of the current Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system are acknowledged. This vulnerability has been recognized for some time and significant efforts were required to identify and obtain project approval during the period of restraint. CPIC renewal is currently well under way, and one of the first projects to be initiated will stabilize and improve the availability of the existing system.

While there are delays in the opening of new criminal record files and in the updating of existing files, the opening of these files is given the highest priority and is controlled through separate records management streams. At the same time, there are also delays in entering new fingerprints and in checking fingerprints for existing records. Again, separate records management streams are used to monitor and control the work flow. For both of these concerns, a business case has been developed and presented to address the adequate resource levels required to respond to the current and projected workloads. A process review is also under way and will address the streamlining of work processes, a strategy to deal with backlogs, the establishment of turnaround targets and standards, and the improvement of client services.

The RCMP recognizes that this chapter raises a number of important points and concerns related to the management, control and monitoring of National Police Services, and provides a blueprint to build upon. Our objective of a single-point accountability for NPS resulted in the recent decision of the Senior Executive Committee to create the role of Deputy

Commissioner NPS — Technical Infrastructure. This decision will greatly improve this organization’s ability to efficiently and effectively deliver the services.

The RCMP will pursue the development of an advisory committee for NPS, and a committee is being established to

implement, in an expeditious manner, the changes recommended in this chapter. This committee will report to our Senior Executive Committee on a quarterly basis. Let us assure you that the senior management of the Force is committed to addressing the recommendations contained in the chapter.



About the Audit

Objectives

The objectives of this audit were to determine:

- whether the RCMP has improved its essential services to the law enforcement community and whether it has made progress in responding to areas of concern identified in previous audits and studies; and
- the extent to which the RCMP has the capacity, structures and procedures to respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of clients in the next decade.

Scope

Although national services to the law enforcement community represent only about six percent of the RCMP's spending, they play an essential role in the criminal justice system. Our audit focussed on forensic laboratories, the criminal history records system, the Canadian Police Information Centre and its relationship with the Canadian Firearms Registry, the fingerprint identification system, the Canadian Police College and Criminal Intelligence Service Canada. We last reported on this area in our 1990 Report, Chapter 27.

Criteria

We expected that:

- levels of service would be adequate;
- mechanisms for user input would be appropriate;
- services would be provided efficiently and economically;
- a management structure would facilitate accomplishment of the RCMP's mandate; and
- funding and human resources would be adequate to meet user requirements.

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